

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Lilinoe Sniffen, 67, Waikīkī lei seller

*"Well, the fifty-cent leis were like the tuberose or whatever, plumerias or something like that. But the other leis run about a dollar and dollar and a half for the carnations, you know. That was real bargain those days."*

Lilinoe Sniffen, the second of six Hawaiian-Caucasian children, was born on December 19, 1919 in Hilo, Hawai'i. At the age of three, she was taken to O'ahu where her father, George Kepo'o, began work as a Pearl Harbor painter. Sniffen's mother, Annie Kaauwai, started selling flower leis in 1929. George Kepo'o eventually joined his wife in the lei selling business.

The Kepo'os lived for short periods near Downtown Honolulu and also on Gulick Avenue. Then they moved to Pauoa where they stayed until 1936. From there they moved to Damon Tract.

Sniffen received her education from Kalihi-Waena Elementary, Waikīkī Elementary, Washington Intermediate and McKinley High School.

At a very young age, Sniffen helped her parents with the lei stand. Their first stand was in front of the Benson-Smith Drug Store on the corner of King and Fort Streets. Soon after, Annie Kepo'o moved her lei stand to Waikīkī where she was the only lei seller. Annie's Lei Stand prospered in Waikīkī until Kepo'o's death in 1941.

After her mother's death, Sniffen took over the lei selling business and changed the name to Lili's Lei Stand. She and her sister, Ruby, still operate the stand located in the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center.

The Sniffens are presently living in Waimānalo on Hawaiian Homes property awarded to them in 1959. She is a member of the Hawaiian Civic Club, the Ka'ahumanu Society and the Hale o Na Alii. She also enjoys caring for her grandchildren.

Tape No. 13-40-1-85

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Lilinoe Sniffen (LS)

April 3, 1985

Waimanalo, O'ahu

BY: 'Iwalani Hodges (IH)

IH: This is an interview with Lilinoe Sniffen at her home in Waimanalo, O'ahu, Hawai'i on April 3, 1985. Interviewer is 'Iwalani Hodges.

Okay, Mrs. Sniffen, where were you born?

LS: Hilo.

IH: And when was that?

LS: December 19, 1919.

IH: How long did you stay in Hilo?

LS: Well, my babyhood would be about, oh until I was three, I think, three or four years old. Then we came to Honolulu.

IH: Do you know why you came to Honolulu?

LS: Ah, no more job over there at that time for my father. So he came to Honolulu to look for a job.

IH: And did he find a job here?

LS: Yeah. He went to work for Pearl Harbor.

IH: What did he do for Pearl Harbor?

LS: Well, he's a painter by trade, you know. So he got paint jobs down there. So he worked there until there was a big layoff around, maybe about '29 or somewhere around there, you know.

IH: Where did you live when you moved here?

LS: All over the place. Let's see, where did we go. I don't know if you remember, I doubt it. On Beretania Street where the capitol is now. Now let's see. The housing, I mean the capitol housing and then there's, I think it was more down towards where the new water--

you know where the new water company is? Around in that area, they used to have, what you call it, an armory, you know and all in there used to be all little houses. That's where we stayed when we came from Hawai'i. We stayed there until about, well I'd say, we stayed there about two or three years, I think. Then we went to Gulick Avenue and stayed, a place up there. From there we moved up to Pauoa. You know where the ice company is in Pauoa? Up in that area. So, we stayed until 1936, I think. Then from there we moved down to Damon Tract.

IH: When you were living in Pauoa, is that when your mother started to sell leis?

LS: No. She sold leis right after my father got laid off from Pearl Harbor, around '29.

IH: Where did she start selling the leis?

LS: Down the boat.

IH: Aloha Tower?

LS: Yeah. But she---well, on the corner of King [Street] and Fort Street, there was a drugstore--the Benson-Smith Drug Store. Well, she asked permission if she can sit there, you know, and while the people come down and then go down to the boat. So she stayed there for oh, not too long, 'cause that's when just about the time we had moved. No, I think my father got out around '26. Because '27 we were already in Waikiki. So we only stayed where the Benson-Smith is about maybe six months or something like that. Then we moved to Waikiki.

IH: So how old were you then, when you were at the Benson-Smith Store?

LS: Ah, I'd say about maybe eight.

IH: Did you go with your mother when she went to sell leis?

LS: Yeah. If I have to go to school, well, I go to school, you know.

IH: What school were you going to at that time?

LS: Well, at that time, I was going to Kalihi School, no, Waikiki School. We came out of Kalihi-Waena and I went to Waikiki School.

IH: You started at Kalihi-Waena?

LS: Yeah, and then went to Waikiki School because she goes down to, well the boat only come in once a week or whatever. Then we go down to Waikiki and we stay there all day, you know, and all night. When I'm finished with school, I just walk back to the lei stand.

IH: She stayed there all day and all night?

LS: Yeah. Well, I mean not all night but we leave there maybe about

eleven [p.m.] or twelve [a.m.]. That's growing years, you know. That's before we got my sister Ruby and another brother.

IH: Oh, this was before they came?

LS: Yeah. So there was just two of us, you know, my older brother and myself.

IH: So how early in the morning did you have to get up to get down to the lei stand?

LS: Well, if it's going to the boat, then we have to get up early because we go early there, maybe about 6:30 or something like that. But then if we going to Waikiki, ah, maybe we get there about, well, she'll drop me off at school and then she comes back and open up the lei stand. So would be around 7:00, 7:30 something like that.

IH: And how did you get your flowers?

LS: Well, they deliver it.

IH: Oh, they did? That's good.

LS: Yeah, that was so much easier, you know.

IH: Yeah. Do you know where they came from?

LS: Well, they came from Wilhelmina Rise, Manoa. Manoa is where the tuberose and the gardenias grow and the gingers. Wilhelmina Rise was where all the carnations used to grow until they think they weren't making enough money so they turned it into real estate, you know. So they bought all those people out that used to have their farms up there.

IH: Do you remember any of the names of any of the farms?

LS: I know the ones that we were taking from. There were Mr. and Mrs. Cho and then there was. . . . Well, I guess I can only remember them 'cause . . .

IH: Where was their farm?

LS: Up in Wilhelmina Rise. Then when they sold that place, then I guess they didn't go back to growing flowers any more so there were new growers and they grew it out at Koko Head. All in the back used to be farmers, carnation farmers.

IH: Is that Koko Head by Hawai'i Kai?

LS: Uh huh [yes]. So that's where they moved to. Over there, I guess I can remember some of the names, Lee and another family. Really, I just remember the ones that we took from anyway.

IH: Sounds like they were mostly Orientals.

LS: They were! All Koreans. Koreans were the carnation growers. The Japanese grew tuberose, gardenias and gingers--from Mānoa.

IH: What other kinds of leis did you make besides those?

LS: Ah, well, the old-fashioned maunaloa we used to make, long time ago. And then we made, um. . . . I guess that's about it. Nowadays is all different, you know. You make all kinds. There used to be a lady we used to buy the pikakes from. They string the pikakes and they sell it to us, and we sell it out--because the pikakes are so tedious, you know, so small. And when they string it, why they know how to do it, and they string it faster. Otherwise, would take us a long time to do it. We can do carnations, tuberose and gardenias and still have time to do other things. But pikakes, whew, and now they have the 'ilima and stuffs like that. Well, we don't, we just buy the leis already made so that makes it a little easier for us.

IH: When you started down in Waikīkī, how much were the leis?

LS: Fifty cents. Compared to it now, whew!

IH: And who were your customers?

LS: Well, there was quite a lot of Mainland tourists and there was quite a lot of local Haoles.

IH: What about locals like Hawaiian people, beach boys, and entertainers?

LS: Well, those and even the people that lived here. You know, the Haole people that lived here? Well, they come and buy. Once in a while we get the Dillingham. Once in a while we get the, ah, what's that now, the Andersons. And once in a while we get the, oh, gosh, the Youngs. And once in a while we get the Gards. All those people, you know. Then after maybe for the last twenty years, we've had quite a lot of people that is in business that used to buy leis from us all the time.

IH: What kind of business?

LS: Oh, like trade, publishing company and um, oh, like Castle & Cooke and the one with Walker, Henry Walker them, you know. That's what, ah, is that Baldwin? No, it's not Baldwin. Well, anyway, all those people and sometimes the president from the banks. They buy all the time. I have pretty good clientele.

IH: So its mostly local Haoles and Mainland Haoles?

LS: Yeah, and local people, you know.

IH: You know, back in the '30s and '40s, did local people wear leis?

LS: Yeah. Sure they did, when they go to parties. But not every day, you know. Some of them even fifty cents they can't afford it.



Well, the fifty-cent leis were like the tuberose and whatever, plumerias or something like that. But the other leis run about a dollar and dollar and a half for the carnations, you know. That was real bargain those days. Now it's so expensive. All the flowers have gone up about two or three times more, than it was.

IH: So where were you located in Waikīkī when you first went there?

LS: That's why I wanted my daughter to bring that book. She still hasn't brought it.

(LS asks daughter for book.)

LS: Well, I have this book I put together. Have from the time in front of the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel, February, 1927] all the way down the street and where the old golf course used to be--Duke Kahanamoku Golf Course--over there (1933). In the front between the Moana Hotel and the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] or the Outrigger Canoe Club. Was right there.

IH: Was it a miniature golf?

LS: Yeah. Miniature golf. Then we came back to the Outrigger (1937). We had a little cubbyhole where the Outrigger used to be, between the trees.

IH: The Outrigger Canoe Club?

LS: Yeah. That's before they moved down the other side [present location--Diamond Head end of Kalākaua Avenue]. Then from there they were gonna tear down the Outrigger. So we had to move again. So we moved and we went back on the street again. (Laughs) We WERE on the street. Now, we were on the street around, ah. . . . Thirty-nine ['39] we were back on the street again because all these things that was building up.

(Interview interrupted. LS's daughter brings in a photo album. Interview resumes.)

LS: All this is my whole family. (LS shows pictures.) This is my father. This is my mother. Right here. This is in the front of the Moana Hotel. That's where she . . .

IH: Was that your first lei stand?

LS: No, no, no, no. The first lei stand is . . . . (LS looks for picture.) That's in the front of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel [on Kalākaua Avenue].

IH: And that was your first stand? Just a table . . .

LS: Uh huh [yes]. Just a table and a place to hang the lei.

IH: This is you? (IH points to a photo.) And your brother?

LS: (LS points to the photo.) No, this is me. My brother is here. This is the sister before Ruby.

IH: And your mother. And this is your father. Oh, that's a nice picture! How did you keep the flowers fresh without refrigeration?

LS: Take a chance!

(Laughter)

IH: How long would the leis last?

LS: Well, it usually last about, as long as it's kept cool, you know. Maybe we put damp rags on the flowers and then newspaper over it so it will keep it cool. And not, we don't leave it in the sun. See, right in the back here (LS points to the garden behind the lei stand in the photo, Royal Hawaiian Hotel grounds) there's all kinds of bushes. So we stick it underneath there. So that keeps it nice and moist. But we also had something hanging because, so that they'll know that that's lei stand. So that's our first one.

IH: And how long would the leis last?

LS: It should last for about three days!

IH: Oh! That's pretty good.

LS: It is. Then night time when we go home, they use to have a--what you call it now--the ice house. Where is it. Well, it's not there anymore. But on Cooke Street, between Cooke and on Kapi'olani [Boulevard] and then was a little short road. Then there was a Primo Company, I think it was. And then ice plant. So we used to go there late at night and put all the leis into this, uh, it's just like a cooler, it's not a freezing. You know it's for the ice, to keep the ice good until the next day. So we used to stick all our baskets in there. Of course, we gotta name it because plenty people do that, from other like Downtown and all that. They come bring it over there to keep it . . . .

IH: Oh, the lei sellers do that?

LS: Yeah, from Downtown and they bring it out there and they put it all in that icebox. They have the icebox have, uh, I mean the people who run the icebox have a portion where all the lei sellers stick their baskets of leis in there. Next morning, we go and get it and bring it back.

IH: Was there a fee for that?

LS: Yeah. Not much. I'd say maybe about fifty cents a night or something like that. (Pause. LS points to picture.) This one here is the

stand that was in where, it's in the front of the golf course [fronting Moana Hotel, ca. 1933] . . .

IH: This was your second stand? Annie's Lei Stand?

LS: Yeah, yeah. Annie's, that's my mother. Well from here we moved here. (LS points to photo of their third lei stand located by the driveway of the Outrigger Canoe Club.)

IH: So this is a covered stand?

LS: Yeah, it's covered stand or canvas.

IH: Did you have a refrigerator in there?

LS: Yeah, right there. Yep.

IH: And when did you move to this location?

LS: Ah, (pause) this here was in the '30s (LS points to the first lei stand, 1927-33) . . .

IH: The first one.

LS: Yeah. So this here [the second lei stand, 1933-37] could have been about '35. I think '35.

IH: Nineteen thirty-five? You were in front of the golf course?

LS: Yeah. See this little place here? That's in front of the Outrigger Canoe Club [the third lei stand, 1937-39].

IH: Did you have a stand there too?

LS: Yeah, it's a stand, right here. (LS points to a covered lei stand.)

IH: So this was your third?

LS: The third. Then . . .

IH: So this third stand was sort of similar to that . . .

LS: Well, it's smaller. This is smaller.

IH: Why did you move?

LS: Well, they wanted to knock down the building! (Laughs)

IH: Oh. That's a good reason!

(Laughter)

LS: Yeah! So we moved here. This place right here. And that was on



the side where the driveway of the Outrigger Canoe Club is. There was a little spot right here between the trees. So my father built it up into a lei stand. So that was the number three lei stand. Then after that, we still came out on the street. Because they were working taking down the Outrigger Canoe Club, breaking it up. So we moved. We went on the street at the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] entrance of the driveway. So we put up umbrellas. This here. (LS points to picture.)

IH: This is your fourth lei stand?

LS: Fourth lei stand. [Lili's Lei Stand, which was either a truck or van stand, was located at different spots on the Royal Hawaiian block of Kalākaua Avenue from 1933-60.] This one, I ran it.

IH: Your mother was gone already?

LS: Yeah. She died. She died in '41.

IH: So this one out on the street there's no, actually no stand. It was just umbrellas and tables?

LS: No, it was a truck. It was a truck and umbrellas, tables and that's all.

IH: Did you leave the truck there?

LS: Yeah. We left it there and went home on another car. (LS points to another picture.) This is another one here, that's umbrella and the truck.

IH: Now when you were, okay, this first three locations, did they charge you?

LS: Yeah. Twenty dollars a month.

IH: So then when you moved out on the street . . .

LS: I didn't have to pay anything . . .

IH: The police didn't bother you?

LS: No, they didn't have any machines or meters. No, they didn't bother us. So we stayed here for quite a while. All through 1941. Right through the war years. Only at night during the wartime, you had to take the car off the main, of the street, you know what I mean.

IH: So when you came back the next day, was your space always there?

LS: Well, you come early, enough to get the first spot. (Laughs)

IH: How early was that?

LS: Oh, I'd say about 7:30 'cause they don't park on the street. And this here. (LS points to pictures.) After, all this here, and this here (LS points to photos of truck and van stands on Kalākaua Avenue), we got these little kiosks.

IH: Grass shack. What did you say?

LS: Kiosks. K-, how do you spell that one now. Kiosk, so that's like K-I-O-S-K, I think it is. That's how you spell it. So then . . .

IH: Where was this?

LS: This was between McInerny [Store] and Sheraton [Waikīkī Hotel] had another building in the front made out of wood.

IH: That was part of Sheraton?

LS: That was part of Sheraton.

IH: The Sheraton [Waikīkī Hotel] was already built?

LS: Oh yeah. I mean the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] was already built and everything. When I came back over here the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] is in the back here (LS points to the Diamond Head side of the lei stand in the photo), you know.

IH: So this was sort of in the front of the Royal . . .

LS: In the front of the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] and in, on the sides of this other building, a shopping area that they built. And McInerny was over here.

IH: On the 'Ewa side of the building?

LS: Yeah.

IH: So this place, was on the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] grounds?

LS: Yeah.

IH: Did they build this for you?

LS: Yeah. They build those for us. They charge rent. Wasn't much but. . . . Like, I was---well, from that time on, there were other people that were, that had come into Waikīkī area to sell leis. You know what I mean?

IH: Yeah. When about did they come in?

LS: Well, um, see the other lei stands down the street, they're related.

IH: The ones who are there now?

LS: Yeah. The one that's way down ['Ewa end of Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center]. Well, their mother had a stand, out there, right after my mother. Well my mother had asked her, you know how some Hawaiians they are nice. They ask one another to come down where there's a little bit more money than wherever it is. So she did come. But then, like over here now. (LS points.)

IH: That's your first lei stand.

LS: She was over here, maybe couple of years, you know, after we got there.

IH: She had a stand right next to you?

LS: Yeah. Two or three years after, she came out. You see, some of them they feel that it's not as busy. It's not busy, so they don't like to come out whatever time, they don't want to come out at the set time to open up the stand. So they come out whenever they feel like coming out. So that was all right, too.

IH: So that's what they did?

LS: Yeah. But we came every day so that everybody will know that we're there. So if they want to buy anything, they know just where to go. So they come here and buy it. So by the time it's almost evening time that's when these other people open up. But---the busy time is between three o'clock and six [o'clock]. And if you're not there between that time, you don't get much. 'Cause at night, it's only passing-byers. If they stop, fine. If they don't stop, well, that's it.

IH: Why did she make this first move from the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] grounds to up by the golf course?

LS: Because it was a better place because they had a protection, you know. They made up a house like, so they don't get wet and they can have a refrigerator and everything. So we stayed here about two years or something like that. Then they had to, uh, knock it down. So we moved over to here [Outrigger Canoe Club driveway]. Then we stayed there for another two years. Then they were going to knock down the old Outrigger Club and build a new one.

IH: Were they going to build the new one in the same place?

LS: Well, in the back of it. All in front they gonna make a sort of a walkway into. . . . Well, they had an arcade, like an arcade, so they gonna use the whole front and build the club in the back.

IH: Oh, I see, and what year was that that they built the building?

LS: Must be about '38, '39 somewhere around there [actually 1941]. That's when that Outrigger Club was built. And after all that, then they built the Outrigger Hotel. And the Outrigger

Club moved up to Kapi'olani Park, on the other side. So then we came down and all this happened. And then this, this is where the. . . .

IH: So when you moved out to the street, is that when you changed the name to Lili's Lei Stand?

LS: When I moved to---this here (LS points to the photo of her truck-stand on Kalākaua Avenue), like this, then I changed it to Lili's because by that time, why, they don't remember my mother, see. She's already passed away in '41. So we got here. (LS points to the photo of the kiosk.) And this is what the lei stand inside looked.

IH: This is the one back at the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel]?

LS: Yeah, back at the Royal Hawaiian. And we had an icebox in the back here. (LS turning pages of album.) These are all the tables that we had--this display here--on the tables.

IH: So what school did you go to after Waikīkī School?

LS: After Waikīkī, Washington [Intermediate School]. Then I had one year at McKinley [High School].

IH: Well, when you went to those schools, did you also have to go down and help your mother after?

LS: Yes.

IH: And how did you get down there?

LS: Well, she drops me off at school. Then she comes---she's on her way back to Waikīkī, you know. That's in the morning. Now, I went through Washington Intermediate. And from there, I went to McKinley. I only stayed there for one year because I just couldn't take it.

IH: McKinley?

LS: I couldn't take the hours in Waikīkī, do my homework, and everything else. By that time, business had built up, you got more flowers to string. You know what I mean? It was really something. So I had to quit.

IH: Yeah. Were you staying at the lei stand till eleven o'clock at night?

LS: Yeah.

IH: Oh boy, you just couldn't go to school early in the morning after that.

LS: No. You wake up early, yes, and you get ready to go. But to be in school, listening to subjects and whatnot, you can't go on.

IH: So how did you get from school . . .

LS: Back to the lei stand? Bus. Or trolley cars I guess that thing those days.

IH: Did you have time to play on the beach or anything?

LS: No.

IH: Strictly at the lei stands?

LS: Strictly at the lei stands.

IH: Was hard work then, huh?

(Laughter)

LS: My older brother and me did quite a bit of work at the lei stand. But then, when his work is finished, his work is finished. Then he does whatever he's gonna do--surfing or whatever. But I still have to stay at the lei stand. (Laughs) And while these kids [LS's brother and sisters] were being born and everything, I still had to watch the lei stand!

IH: Did your father stay at the lei stand also?

LS: Yeah, he did. Well, he watched all these kids, you know, that is being born. He took care of them.

IH: So what you folks made at the lei stand was enough for you to live on?

LS: Yeah. Was enough to live on. Pay rent, and whatever.

IH: That's pretty good then.

LS: It was a good job. Even till today, it should be good while they are running it. It should be good.

IH: When would you say were the best years for lei sellers? The best money-making years?

LS: I'd say in the '50s. There were people coming in that has never been here before. And they enjoyed everything that they seen and bought, you know. And they keep coming back. Those are the people. But in the '60s---well most of the people in the '50s, they all come back every year. So we always have them. But there's a lot of people, I don't think they any good. They only here to see what they can get for as little to pay as possible, you know.

IH: That was started in the '60s, those kind of people?

LS: Uh huh [yes]. Went through into the '70s. But, there was always some people that was very good. But the come-backers are always



the best. Every night they buy leis!

IH: Did you folks use to socialize with them also?

LS: Sometimes, but not all the time. If we are at a place, where they just come in or something like that, well, we usually pass them a drink or something.

IH: What year did you move to Damon Tract?

LS: Damon Tract? Thirty-six ['36].

IH: So your mother was still living at that time.

LS: Yeah. Then we moved out in '59. Because that's when the people were buying Damon Tract. I think it was, who was it bought it. I guess the people that was taking care of things for the Damons.

IH: When you were living down there, did you ever go to the airport to sell leis?

LS: Never did. Was too many.

IH: Then when you moved to Waimānalo . . .

LS: Still went to Waikīkī. Yeah.

IH: And you still have your stand there now?

LS: Uh huh [yes]. It's moved from one place to another, but it's still there.

IH: It's always been located in that one block, that Royal Hawaiian block?

LS: Uh huh [yes].

IH: Everybody knows you folks because you were the first lei sellers down there.

LS: Well, we been pushed around so many times. But you gotta fight for it, in order to get it. And if you don't fight, you don't get it.

IH: Uh huh [yes].

LS: They wanted to get rid of EVERYBODY! On the sidewalks . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

IH: Let me ask you about the time when they were trying to get all the lei sellers and seed sellers off the streets. When was that? What year was that?

LS: Seventy-three [actually 1960]. I think it was between '73 and '76 when they were trying to get them off.

IH: Were you still on the street, in the van? In the truck?

LS: No, we were in the stand. (LS turning album pages.) Ah, no, we were still on the streets.

IH: Still in the truck?

LS: In the truck.

IH: What happened at that time? Why were they trying to get everybody off the street?

LS: Well, the stores were complaining that the seed ladies were selling ivory and things that they are selling. You know what I mean? So that would give them a competition with these lei stands that were selling all these chokers and necklaces. Lucky they didn't go into pearls. (Chuckles) But they were selling all these things. So the stores were getting upset of them. They didn't mean to pick on us, too. They don't sell flowers. Why should they bother about us? So we went down and talk to the, not the legislature but the one in city hall, to tell them because we're not seed sellers. We're flower sellers. So don't pick on us. If you want, you pick on those people, but not on us.

IH: Did all the lei sellers get together and go down? The flower lei sellers?

LS: Yeah.

IH: Did you have an association or something like that?

LS: No, no. It was just who wants to go. If they don't want to go, well, that's tough. But they were ALL along the sidewalk. There were say about, thirty of 'em, thirty or thirty-five of 'em. All these little tables along the sidewalk.

IH: All seed sellers?

LS: All seed sellers.

IH: Was that on both sides of the street?

LS: No. That was only on one side because Liberty House is on the other side.

IH: That was only on the ma kai side of the street?

LS: Only on the ma kai side.

IH: So what happened to you folks when that happened?

LS: That's when they build these little huts. This. (LS points to picture.)

IH: On the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] grounds?

LS: On the Royal Hawaiian grounds.

IH: Did they build for all the flower lei sellers down there?

LS: Yeah.

IH: Ah, good! And then what happened to the seed lei sellers down there?

LS: Well, they were all kicked out. They've never come back to the sidewalk again.

IH: So when everybody was on the sidewalk, it must have been pretty crowded then.

LS: It was. People can hardly pass by. If there were a lot of people walking, you know, they would have to go sideways.

IH: What ethnicity were the other lei sellers, flower lei sellers? What nationality were the other lei sellers?

LS: Hawaiian. They were Hawaiian.

IH: Are they still down there?

LS: Yeah, they still there. Well, there's only two of them down there, besides us.

IH: What were their names?

LS: One is Auntie Bella's Lei Stand. And the other one is Coconut Hut, I think it is. So that's the only two there now besides us.

IH: Is one of those the same one that came with your mother?

LS: Yeah. Ah, no, no. That's the---one is the [daughter] and one is the granddaughter. One of the ladies in the Coconut Hut--was their mother that came by with my mother. Then Auntie Bella's Lei Stand, the granddaughter runs it.

IH: Oh, so there are two different lei stands, but they both came from the same lady. What was her name?

LS: Auntie Bella.

IH: Did you remember any celebrations in Waikīkī that really stand out

in your mind?

LS: Well, just the ho'olaule'a during Aloha Week.

IH: Did they always have that?

LS: Yes. They always had it--on the roads, you know. They have the stages and stuff where all the entertainers used to entertain. That was about the only thing that they had there on Aloha Week.

IH: When did they start that celebration?

LS: (Chuckles) They must have started about in the '60s, I think. And then, of course, the parades used to go through there all the time. But now they don't. Did you notice they've never gone through Kalākaua Avenue? Because was too much, um, too much working activity on Kalākaua Avenue. That would jam the parades up so they switched it--as far as Ala Moana [Park].

IH: Before days, they had a parade on Kamehameha Day?

LS: Yeah. Well, that used to come from Downtown all the way to Waikīkī. That stopped. Only went as far as--what is that now, where the army place is?

IH: Fort DeRussy.

LS: Uh huh [yes]. I think the people enjoyed that, you know, when the parade was on. So instead of them going here and there to watch it, they can stay right on the sidewalk on Kalākaua Avenue.

IH: Do you belong to the Lei Sellers Association?

LS: No.

IH: When was that formed?

LS: That was formed in the '30s. But I don't know if it's still going on.

IH: But you folks never joined that?

LS: No.

IH: When did you start dancing with Kodak Hula Show?

LS: Oh, that was ten years ago. They just happened to need one.

IH: Oh, that's nice. What other organizations do you belong to?

LS: Oh, the Hale O Na Ali'i and the Ka'ahumanu ['Ahahui Ka'ahumanu of Honolulu].

IH: What is Hale O Na Ali'i?

LS: They're warriors.

IH: They're warriors? Is that a service organization?

LS: Now, what did you mean by that?

IH: Well, you know, like the civic clubs and things like that.

LS: Oh, they're a little bit better than the civic club. Because when you die, they give you whatever your money is in there. It's a benevolent society or something like that, where they charge you. Well, you paying your own anyway. But they return it back to you for being a good member for so many years. All this time, I think I been in there for forty years.

IH: What kind of activities do they have?

LS: Well, they have all kinds of activities. They go out sing, all that stuff, you know.

IH: But why do you say it's a warrior association?

LS: Well, that's what it is. It's a---you know like the Kamehameha Lodge is for the kings. And the Ka'ahumanu is for the queens. So the Hale O Na Ali'i is just for warriors. But they have another one that they have for the HIGH officials of the warriors. There's several of them. There's about five or six of them.

IH: So how do you qualify as a warrior?

LS: Well, like the Hale O Na Ali'i, you can always belong to that if you ask somebody that you want to join, you know.

IH: Oh, I see. It's not tied to your genealogy or anything like that?

LS: No, no, it isn't. The only one that is the . . .

(Interview is interrupted.)

END OF INTERVIEW



# **WAIKĪKĪ, 1900 - 1985: ORAL HISTORIES**

## **Volume I**

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